SOC Clyde Branch
Annual General Meeting, Monday 7th April 2025

MINUTES

The SOC Clyde Branch AGM was held as an in-person meeting at Partick Burgh Hall. Twenty nine people were present.

1. Apologies
   Apologies were received from the following committee members: Ian Fulton, Kevin McCormick, Sandy McNeil, John Simpson, Emma Anderson and Kevin Sinclair.

2. Minutes of previous AGM
   The minutes of the previous AGM had been available on the SOC and on the Birds in Clyde website for some time. There were no comments made regarding these and no matters arising.

3. Office Bearers' Reports

   3.1 Chairperson's Report
   Zul Bhatia presented the Chairperson's report. This is attached as Appendix 1.

   3.2 Secretary's Report
   Rebecca Dickson presented the Secretary's report. This is attached as Appendix 2.

   3.3 Treasurer's Report
   An unaudited summary of the accounts was provided by Liz Parsons. Liz has already sent the accounts to HQ, we don't usually put them on the website.

   3.4 Recorder's Report
   In John Simpson's absence, Zul Bhatia presented the Recorder's report. This is attached as Appendix 4

   3.5 Outings Organiser's Report
   Ania Owsianka presented the Outings Organiser's report. This is attached as Appendix 5.

4. Election of Office Bearers

A notice had been published by the Secretary via the HQ email notice and the Clyde Branch Grapevine inviting nominations and volunteers to fill the Office Bearer positions. There had been no responses received to this invitation.

Therefore, your committee would like to propose that the following office bearers be elected

Chairperson – Zul Bhatia
Treasurer – Liz Parsons
Secretary – Rebecca Dickson
Branch Representative on SOC Council – Zul Bhatia

This was approved by the meeting.

5. Election of Committee Members

A notice had been published by the Secretary via the HQ Mailchimp email and the Clyde Branch Grapevine inviting nominations and volunteers to join the branch committee. There had been no responses received to this invitation.

Therefore, your committee would like to propose that the following persons be elected as Committee Members

Toby Wilson, Sandy McNeil, Fiona McLean, Kevin Sinclair, Andrew Russell, Emma Anderson, Ian Fulton, Kevin McCormick, John Simpson, John Sweeney, and Emma Davis.

This was approved by the meeting.

6. Evening meetings

Since we have changed the position of where the talks are held within the Partick Burgh Hall, there has been an improvement of attendance and general feedback from attendees. Previously there had been complaints that it was hard to hear the speaker due to the shape / large size of the hall, but this was sorted by moving to under the balcony of the Large Hall.

It is encouraged for attendees to bring their surplus books to boost branch funds. We have been collecting a steady amount of donations for these books throughout the year. It is good to share these books with like minded members!

7. Any other business

Words were said in remembrance of David Palmar, his absence is still keenly felt to all members that knew him.

Rebecca Dickson thanked all for attending and closed the meeting.

Minutes prepared by Rebecca Dickson, Secretary, SOC Clyde Branch

Appendix 1

Chairperson's report for 2024/2025

I have now been in post for just over seven years as Chair and I have continued to work closely with our Clyde Branch Committee which met twice this year (both online). Sadly, David Palmar passed away this year and his absence is keenly felt. Not only was he an active member of our branch committee, he still had a significant role in our outings. During the year, we co-opted Emma Davies onto the committee. All the existing committee members have expressed a willingness to continue for another year.

Monthly meetings in the period September to April continued. Two of them were joint ones with the RSPB Glasgow Group. Our Branch Secretary, **Rebecca Dickson's** report gives more details. The move to Partick Burgh Hall, after a few teething problems, proves to have been a good move and has saved us a huge amount of money. The average attendance this year has been 44 people per meeting (Av = 43 last year).

Outings continued to be very popular. **Ania Owsianka** has done an excellent job and over the year, 97 different people joined an outing during the year and we recorded 141 species of birds in total. Ania's report gives more details.

We continued to promote **Recording and Reporting** birds and it was very pleasing to see increasing number of people reporting birds regularly. In 2024, BirdTrack received 184,858 records (up by 1.37% on the previous year). The Recorder team led by **John Simpson** included **Val Wilson, John Sweeney** and I was quite active as will be seen from the Recorder's report.

The popular **Daily Grapevine** (now going in some form or other for over 30 years) and the **WhatsApp** group for instant sightings and managed by **Val Wilson** continues to be offered free to SOC members.

Fieldwork is a very significant activity for many of our members and as usual, a lot was carried out. A list of all the active projects known to us in the Clyde is available via our branch website.

Social media: Twitter / X (led by **Andrew Russell**), the Clydebirds Facebook page (thank you to **John Molloy** for allowing us to use it to promote SOC) and increasingly Bluesky were all used to communicate with people.

Clyde Bird Reports: Two more of the 'missing years' (2009-2021) reports were completed during the year and available as free downloads. The 2022 report is well under way.

Branch website: This is a great resource which is well used with 100-500 weekly users. Our Webmaster, **Kevin McCormick** continues to do a fantastic job for us. The most popular pages were the Glasgow Peregrine Project, Outings, Recent Sightings, Talks and **Donald Wilson's** monthly reviews which started in January.

John Simpson led the **Glasgow Peregrine Project** on behalf of the SOC and several of us were involved in talking to the public.

Data Team: This was formed to bring together various bits of work that fall under 'data'. Members of the group are John Simpson, Tony Hall, Kevin McCormick, David Horsburgh and I. We have met four times so far, and amongst other things discussed progress and made plans on Bird Reports,

promoting the Breeding Bird Survey, adding sites to the SOC Where to Watch Birds in Scotland app and updating the BirdTrack Gazetteer. **Tony Hall** has done a great deal of work on the last two subjects.

Clyde Atlas: No significant progress was made during the year on using the tetrad data collected in the past. This is a huge task and in view of the other work on the go, it was decided to shelve this for now and come back to it in the future..

SOC Clyde Discussion Group: Unfortunately, this has been fairly inactive this year but we recently started a recruiting drive to find someone who could co-ordinate this important work. So far, no one has been forthcoming.

Branch funds are very healthy. Our Treasurer **Liz Parson's** report gives details. Liz is also our 'tea lady' so double thanks to her.

THE FUTURE

Monthly outings will continue to feature significantly in our programme. Apart from the wildlife we see, they are an excellent resource for some informal mentoring.
Continue with **monthly meetings** in the September to April period.

The **Glasgow Peregrine Project** has some new partners (Swarovski, Viking Optical and WWF Scotland) and provides an excellent opportunity to work together and use the watches for social interactions too.

Have the occasional **joint meeting / outing** with partners.

Continue to promote the study, enjoyment and conservation of wild birds and their habitats across the Clyde area making use of the considerable bird data we hold. Encourage more recording and reporting of birds and other wildlife.

Make more progress ourselves on making better use of the data we hold as well as encouraging others to use it.
Develop the **Discussion Group**.

Consider running another **Clyde Big Birding Day** in May 2025 and using this for mentoring too.

Develop the links with **University of Glasgow** to make better use of our bird data by producing relevant visualisations using GIS tools.

Liaise further with other organisations active in Clyde to input into management of sites important for birds as well as improved monitoring.

Acknowledgements
Many people's contributions have already been acknowledged in the relevant section above, but for the branch to operate as successfully as it has, there are so many more people involved. Thank you to all of you who have supported the Clyde Branch in one way or another this year. If you have any feedback or suggestions, please let me or any of the Committee members have them.

Zul Bhatia - Chair, Clyde Branch of the SOC**,** April 2025

Appendix 2

Secretary's Report for 2024/2025

Clyde Branch membership now stands at 414 memberships or 475 persons (counting joint memberships as two persons). Again, this is an increase on from the previous year.

The distribution list for the daily **Clyde SOC Grapevine** now stands at 273. The Grapevine averages a 75% opening rate from users. Many thanks to Val Wilson and the team for all their efforts in maintaining such a high standard of service.

Our branch **Website** (birdsinclyde.scot) continues to be a great success. This year the website team (a sub-group within the committee) has not met up much however as always Kevin McCormick our webmaster has been fantastic throughout.

Other social media pages are as follows:

- The newest addition is an Instagram page for the **Glasgow Peregrine Project** which currently has 1128 followers!
- The WhatsApp group called '**Clyde SOC Bird News'** has been well used. This now has 175 subscribers and is continuing to be a popular way of getting instant sightings.
- the Facebook '**Clydebirds'** group administered by Clyde SOC member John Molloy now has 1200+ members.
- the Facebook '**Baron's Haugh Wildlife Sightings'** group administered by Jason Newton now has 2400+ members.
- We recently changed from X to Bluesky which has started to build up followers.

I would like to thank John Simpson, Paul Baker and everyone involved again for their works on the Glasgow Peregrine Project. Within a short period of time, huge efforts have gone into promoting the project which has paid off, it is clear to see this is inspiring people to want to learn more about this species – and get involved in other types of bird monitoring.

The in-person meetings which were held were:

- **September**: Dr Leah Kelly - Hen Harrier Survey 2023
- **October**: David Raffle, SOC – Getting the most out of BirdTrack
- **November**: Neil Hammatt – Feeding the birds at Holy Loch Nature Reserve: a look at how the reserve supports so many birds
- **December**: Flo Blackbourn – Lesser Black-backed Gull migration
- **January**: Simon Zisman - The Climate Catastrophe – How Is it Affecting Our Birds
- **February**: Billy Thomson and Angus MacIver - Bean Geese on the Slamannan Plateau
- **March**: Steve Willis - Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) workshop
- **April**: Neil Forbes - Vulture Crisis in Africa - does it matter?

In the past, Ian Fulton gave presentations on recent sightings in the Clyde area illustrated with some of the many excellent photographs taken in the area. **No update on this yet.**

Rebecca Dickson – Secretary, Clyde Branch SOC, April 2025

Appendix 3

The Treasurer's report was presented at the AGM, but is not presented in these minutes, but sent directly to HQ.

Appendix 4

Recorder's Report

It's been a busy year with continued work in the 2022 bird report and looking ahead toward 2023. Both the recording and data teams deserve special mention for the sterling work conducted which has supported this effort. If I may take the opportunity to publicly thank Val Wilson, John Sweeney, Tony Hall, David Horsburgh and Zul Bhatia for all their support for this recording effort.

The Clyde Birds Records Panel, which deals with the rare and unusual records, continued with its annual meetings and met on 30th November 2024. The minutes will be posted on the website in due course.

The Glasgow Peregrine Project has gone from strength to strength and now boasts corporate sponsorship from Viking Optical Ltd and Swarovski Optik UK. A new partner has joined the team WWF Scotland. It's hoped to have a public ringing event in mid May, details will be posted on the website. The website is a fantastic resource and this aspect of the projects success is very much down to Kevin McCormick. All of his effort is very much appreciated. There is a book featuring the project due for launch this summer plus an array of media commitments scheduled. The public watches are due to commence shortly and support from the branch to show the birds to the public is keenly sought.

The project launched a Facebook Page and an Instagram Page , huge thank you to Callum Leonard, which is proving popular, please show support and Follow!

The watchpoint concept got off to a great start and the new signage to advise the public of the presence of the Black Grouse lek was erected and is now in force. The work of the branch in conjunction with Lottie Birch of the MOD saw the Black Grouse featured on more than 200 media outlets UK wide, including The Scotsman and STV. All of this work will continue for 2025.

John Simpson - Clyde Area Local Recorder, April 2025

Appendix 5

Outings Report 2024/2025

A full programme of outings – one a month – has taken place during 2024 and the first part of 2025, with outings planned until September 2025. We aim to always have the next three outings on the branch website (birdsinclyde.scot).

2024
April 21st – RSPB Black Devon Wetlands and RSPB Skinflats
May 15th – South East Lothian
June 22nd – Great Cumbrae
July 13th – Ailsa Craig
August 17th – RSPB Baron's Haugh
September 10th – Cramond Island
October 26th – Ardmore Point
November 14th – Tay Reedbeds
December 14th – Hamiltonhill Claypits LNR
January 18th – North Ayrshire Coast
February 1st – WWT Caerlaverock
March 16th – Kinneil and Bothkennar Pools

The average number of participants per outing was 13.8 and the total number of participants over the year was 97. The two most popular outings were to RSPB Baron's Haugh and North Ayrshire Coast each with 24 participants. Over the course of the year, 24 people joined an SOC Clyde branch outing for the first time. 141 species of birds were recorded on the outings during 2024/25. The two outings with the most species seen were South East Lothian (72) and WWT Caerlaverock (70). An average of 49 species were seen per outing.

Planned for next few months of 2025:
April 16th & 17th – Northumberland Coast, May 30th – Isle of May, June 14th – Culter Glen, South Lanarkshire, and July 19th – Ailsa Craig.

Leaders
Thanks go to everyone who has led or has volunteered to lead an outing. Without leaders, it would not be possible to implement such a varied and interesting programme. Thanks to Allan Russell, Donald Wilson, Lang Stewart, Eddie Williams, Sandy McNeil, Scott Black, Zul Bhatia
David Mitchell, Billy Thomson, and Toby Wilson.

Particular thanks to Donald Wilson, who has been a huge help in organising the programme. He is full of good ideas, he knows the places and the people, he has led four of the outings over the past year. I am also extremely grateful to Kevin McCormick, who uploads the outings information onto the website. He always improves my text and and inserts links to the exact locations.

Ania Owsianka – Outings organiser, Clyde Branch of the SOC, April 2025